

2009 International Fire Code Synopsis

In 1993, the Utah State Legislature recodified the Utah Fire Prevention and Safety Act, UCA 53-7-101 through 53-7-411, and set forth legislation adopting a statewide fire code. The State of Utah was one of the first states to adopt a statewide fire code. Since 85% of the State of Utah's fire service is volunteer firefighters, the statewide adoption of the fire code greatly assisted small communities to establish a minimum fire & life safety standard statewide.

Major Fire Code Changes Made by ICC Fire Code Committee

There were a number of changes to the 2009 International Fire Code that were made by the International Code Council, Fire Code Committee, when the code development hearings occurred and were voted upon for approval by the national membership. The major changes are as follows:

1. Emergency responder radio coverage will be required to ensure that emergency responder radio coverage is provided throughout the building. **2009 IFC, Section 510**
2. Photo luminescent markings in exit stairs in High Rise buildings will be required in stair enclosures in new and existing buildings. **2009 IFC, Section 1024 (Proposed to be Deleted)**
3. Firefighter access elevator in new High Rises taller than 120 feet will be required to have increased elevator enclosure and protection requirements to increase the length of time the elevator could be utilized in a fire incident. **2009 IFC, Section 403.6.1**
4. Inspection of fire-rated construction for all buildings to include existing buildings will be required annually. **2009 IFC, Section 701.2**
5. Increased egress capacity in all new sprinklered buildings will now be required due to the loss of the reduction allowed for having an automatic fire sprinkler system installed. **2009 IFC, Section 1005.1**

Fire Code Amendments Specific to the State of Utah

There are a number of amendments to the International Fire Code that have been made over the last 16 years by the Utah Fire Prevention Board that are specific to the needs of the State of Utah. This synopsis does not address every amendment made by the Fire Prevention Board but it does address the major amendments leaving out the very small non-substantive amendments.

1. There are amendments to the fire code modifying the definition and requirements of I-1 occupancies (assisted living facilities, group homes, etc.) and I-2 occupancies (hospitals, nursing homes, mental hospitals, etc.). The State of Utah by legislative

mandate uses a three-tier care system where the International Fire Code and the majority of the rest of the states use a two-tier system. The two tier system is ambulatory and non ambulatory. The State of Utah's three-tier system is ambulatory, semi independent, and non-ambulatory. **R710-9-6.2.2 and R710-9-6.2.3**

2. There are amendments to the fire code that standardize the numbers of clients regulated in occupancies involving health care, nursing homes, day care, etc. This sets minimum numbers requiring licensing and creates uniformity for fire officials, building officials, state health department, and the department of human services. With the uniformity, conflicting codes are not created that adversely affect the public and businesses. **R710-9-6.2.1 and R71-9-6.2.4**

3. There is an amendment that allows R-2 occupancies classified as Boarding Houses accommodating less than 10 persons to be reclassified as an R-3 occupancy or single-family residence. **R710-9-6.2.5**

4. There is an amendment that changes the placement of warning placards on vacant or abandoned buildings or structures that are deemed unsafe to be discretionary with the word "may" rather than mandatory with the word "shall". **R710-9-6.3.3**

5. There is an amendment that allows storage on wall-mounted shelves to be to the ceiling if the automatic fire sprinkler head is not obscured or directly above the wall mounted shelving. **R710-9-6.3.4**

6. There is a retroactive amendment that requires that by 12-31-2011, all elevator access keys statewide will be required to be changed to the same key. There are a number of different elevator access keys now being used statewide and with the advent of automatic aid or mutual aid, there are fire departments responding into neighboring communities that have an elevator access key that is different and makes elevator access impossible. **R710-9-6.5.1**

7. There are amendments that gives authority to the code official to request record drawings ("as builts") to verify modifications and drawings to make sure that all aspects of the fire protection systems have been installed. **R710-9-6.6.1 and R710-9-6.6.2**

8. There are amendments that require in A-2 occupancies (nightclubs, restaurants, taverns, bars, etc.) that if you are going to use pyrotechnics indoors (fireworks), the occupancy is required to be fire sprinklered. **R710-9-6.6.3 and R710-9-6.6.12**

9. There is an amendment that requires Group B ambulatory health care facilities to be in buildings or structures that are fully protected with an automatic fire sprinkler system. **R710-9-6.6.4**

10. There is an amendment that exempts automatic fire sprinklers in all Group R (residences) occupancies. This includes one & two family residences and multiple

single-family dwellings (townhouses) are not required to install an automatic fire sprinkler system. **R710-9-6.6.7**

11. There is an amendment that allows in Group R-4 occupancies (Group Homes) to not have to install an automatic fire sprinkler system if the group home isn't larger than 4500 total square feet and an automatic fire alarm system is installed. **R710-9-6.6.8**

12. There are amendments that modified the allowances for enclosed parking garages and required automatic fire sprinkler systems in all enclosed parking garages except parking garages accessory to R-3 occupancies (residences) that are less than 5,000 square feet. It also modified that access shall be provided within 150 feet anywhere in the enclosed parking garage. **R710-9-6.6.10 and R710-9-6.6.11**

13. There are amendments that require all automatic fire suppression hood systems to be UL300 listed and prohibits dry chemical systems in the State of Utah. It has been proven for many years that dry chemical hood suppression systems no longer work. All other hood extinguishers that are not UL300 are prohibited. **R710-9-6.6.14, R710-9-6.6.15 and R710-9-6.6.16**

14. There is an amendment that allows automatic fire suppression hood systems to be serviced once a year rather than twice a year if the usage is limited to less than six consecutive months per year such as football and baseball stadiums. **R710-9-6.6.17**

15. There are amendments that exempt the retroactive requirement to install fire alarm systems in existing educational occupancies, institutional occupancies, and residential occupancies. **R710-9-6.6.18 and R710-9-6.6.19**

16. There is an amendment that eliminates the need for sensitivity testing on fire alarm systems and allows the need to upgrade the fire alarm system if there are too many nuisance alarms. **R710-9-6.6.20**

17. There is an amendment that requires carbon monoxide detectors to be installed in residences to include apartment buildings, dormitories, fraternities, nontransient motels and hotels, etc. **R710-9-6.6.21**

18. There are amendments that allow a modification of the fire code with regard to special locking arrangements in occupancies where the clinical needs of the persons receiving care require special arrangements. This would include Alzheimer units, dementia units, psychiatric units, and nurseries, where elopement or kidnapping is a significant concern. **R710-9-6.7.1 and R710-9-6.7.2**

19. There is an amendment that modifies stair riser height and thread depth to be in agreement with the building code. There is also an amendment with regard to handrails and their placement that places the two codes in agreement. **R710-9-6.7.3 and R710-9-6.7.4**

20. There is an amendment that requires reasonable spacing of exits if there are more than three exits required. **R710-9-6.7.6**
21. There is an amendment that deletes Section 1024 that would require Luminous Egress Path Markings in a number of different occupancies exit ways where occupied floors are located more than 75 feet above the fire department access. **R710-9-6.7.7**
22. There is an amendment that establishes the use of fireworks in the fire code to be consistent with the Utah State Fireworks Act. **R710-9-6.8.1**
23. There is an amendment that establishes spacing for LP Gas dispensing units near exit doorways in retail occupancies and makes it consistent with the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Act. **R710-9-6.10.1**
24. There is an amendment modifying the National Fire Alarm Code allowing the fire alarm horn system to be silenced during the investigation period, installation of smoke detectors above the main panel and other important places, and modification of the horn volume to be consistent with the other adopted codes. **R710-9-6.12**
25. There is an amendment to NFPA 1124 covering the storage of fireworks inside buildings. These amendments were enacted with the approval of the retail merchants association to provide a reasonable amount of safety and limit bulk storage of fireworks that are offered for sale inside buildings being sold during the summer holiday season. **R710-9-6.13**

September 1, 2009